

McKinne, Barnabas ^[1]

McKinne, Barnabas

by James P. Beckwith, Jr. and John Baxton Flowers III; Revised November 2022.

(ca. 1673–ca. 1740)

Barnabas McKinne, planter, [justice of the General Court](#) ^[2], assemblyman for [Edgecombe County](#) ^[3], justice for [Bertie County](#) ^[4], and militia officer, was born in Isle of Wight County, Va., the son of a McKinnon clansman, Michael Mackenny, who emigrated from Scotland to Virginia, and his wife, Elizabeth. There is no record of the year of his birth, although an agreement exists by which his brother, John McKinne, held custody of his brother Barnabas's land after their father's death in 1686 because Barnabas was not of age. John granted Barnabas full custody of his land on 13 Jan. 1694, presumably at the time he attained his majority.

In 1702 Barnabas McKinne, who seems to have initiated this spelling of the family name, petitioned the Virginia Assembly for permission to build a [gristmill](#) ^[5] on his Black Creek plantation in Isle of Wight (now Southampton County, Va.). Although North Carolina records show him as a petitioner for a land patent in [Chowan County](#) ^[6] in 1713, it was probably in 1721 that he actually moved to that part of Chowan precinct in [Albemarle County](#) ^[7] that in 1722 became [Bertie Precinct](#) ^[8]; his land later fell in the new Edgecombe County proposed by the Assembly in 1735 (but not laid out until 1741) and in [Halifax County](#) ^[9] after 1758. Located near Caledonia Woods on the Morattuck (now [Roanoke](#) ^[10]) River, in an area already settled by [Scots](#) ^[11], McKinne in time owned several thousand acres of land and a large number of enslaved people.

In July 1722 McKinne was appointed a justice of the [General Court](#) ^[2], which usually met in [Edenton](#) ^[12], the home of Chief Justice [Christopher Gale](#) ^[13]. He served at least until 1730 during a period of recurring controversy between the chief justice and governors [George Burrington](#) ^[14] and [Sir Richard Everard](#) ^[15]. As Gale asserted the prerogatives of his office, there was much debate over whether the General Court justices were equals of the chief justice as associates or were subordinates as assistants. Reappointed from time to time, McKinne served at least intermittently until 1730 or later. He also represented [Bertie County](#) ^[4] in the [Assembly](#) ^[16] of 1723 and Edgecombe County in 1734–35. He was appointed commissioner of the peace for Bertie Precinct and in 1727 was a vestryman of North West Parish in Bertie. He also came to be referred to as Major McKinne and later as Colonel, indicating his rank in the local [militia](#) ^[17].

McKinne was married twice. His first wife was named Mary in the deed of sale of his father's plantation in Isle of Wight County, Va., in 1703, but she is not further identified. His second wife was twice-widowed Mary Exum, the daughter of Judge Jeremiah Exum by his wife, Ann Lawrence. Her first marriage was to Jacob Ricks, by whom she had two children, Jacob and Martha. After Ricks's death in 1703 or 1704 she married William Murfey (who died early in 1715), by whom she had a daughter, Ann. In 1719 she married McKinne.

McKinne's will was drawn in 1737 and a codicil added in 1739. He died soon afterwards. He named the following children either in his will or in deeds: Barnabas, Jr. (m. Mary Brown), William (wife's name unknown), John (m. Mary Parrish), Ann (m. William Murfey), Mourning (m. John Pope), Christian (m. William Hurst), Mary Jane (m. John Brown), Patience (m. Joseph Lane), Richard (m. Mary Kitchen), Robert (m. Martha [family name unknown]), and Sara (m. Isaac Ricks). It is not known which or how many of his children were by the first marriage, but there were at least five, one of whom probably was Sara. At the July 1727 meeting of the General Court a grand jury presentment against John Brown, identified as the husband of McKinne's daughter, charged him with bigamy, which he admitted.

In addition to his children, McKinne reared his second wife's two children by Jacob Ricks as well as three sons of his deceased nephew, William McKinne, who were his wards. William McKinne was the son of John McKinne and had owned land in Nansemond County, Va., before moving with his wife, Mary, and their sons, Michael, Matthew, and William, to North Carolina where they settled near Barnabas McKinne. Of these great-nephews, William eventually settled in what became [Wayne County](#) ^[18] where he was a militia officer and political leader.

Among the grandchildren of Barnabas McKinne were [Joel Lane](#) ^[19], of [Wake County](#) ^[20], whose land was purchased as a site for the [state capital](#) ^[21]; and Mary McKinne, who married Nicholas Long of Halifax County.

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